

Congressmen Chet Edwards, Gene Green, & State Rep. Craig Eiland Applaud \$1.7 Billion in Ike Relief Funds Released by U.S. HUD Today: Says More Aid Still Needed to Help Texas Gulf Coast Recover & Rebuild

(WASHINGTON, DC) - U.S. Representatives Chet Edwards (D-Waco), Gene Green (D-Houston), and Texas State Representative Craig Eiland (D-Galveston) today announced that Texas is receiving \$1.74 billion dollars in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to aid ongoing recovery efforts in the Texas Gulf Coast following Hurricane Ike.

"There is vast damage that still exists today along the Texas Gulf Coast, so it is vital that this funding moves quickly toward ongoing relief efforts," said Congressman Edwards, the senior Texas member on the House Appropriations Committee. "The victims of Hurricane Ike, who lost their homes, businesses and their livelihoods, need federal, state, and local authorities to continue to work together diligently to rebuild and recover."

Congressman Gene Green said, "I am glad HUD realizes that there are areas still recovering from Hurricane Ike, and the \$1.7 billion announced today will help with the damage that still lingers along the Texas Coast," said Rep. Gene Green. "While I thank HUD for their continued support, federal commitment is still not at the level it should be, considering that Hurricane Ike is the second costliest Hurricane in history. Those who lost their homes and businesses need increased commitment and cooperation from all levels of government."

State Rep. Eiland said, "We have been out of the Legislative session for just over a week, and as I return home I can see that hope has returned, but the struggles of many people trying to get back on their feet and into their home or business still remain. With stop lights that don't work, parking meters that don't work and debris to still clean up and get rid of, it is evident that this additional aid to our cities and counties is still desperately needed. I appreciate the Texas delegation, and especially Congressman Edwards on the Appropriations Committee, who I talk with almost weekly, not letting Washington forget us."

In 2008, Edwards took a lead role in crafting the emergency hurricane funding as the senior Texas member on the House Appropriations Committee working closely with Houston congressional delegation members Gene Green, Sheila Jackson Lee, and Al Green. After touring some of the damage late last year in Eiland's district, Edwards pledged to continue to look for additional funds for hurricane relief and hopes to have the state matching fund requirement of 25 percent waived for all federal hurricane relief funds.

"Going forward, I will continue to work with Rep. Eiland and Congressional leaders in Washington to find additional funds to help our Gulf Coast communities get back on their feet," said Edwards.

Immediately following Hurricane Ike, Texas received \$1.3 billion dollars of CDBG funds to help address emergency housing, economic and infrastructure needs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced Tuesday that it has surpassed \$2 billion in public and individual assistance grants to help the state of Texas and local communities recover from the storm. Hurricane Ike will likely prove to be the second-costliest hurricane in U.S. history, behind only Hurricane Katrina inflicting upwards of \$30 billion dollars of damage.

CDBG Disaster Recovery funds aid recovery efforts in housing, economic development, infrastructure and prevention of further damage to affected areas and are essential to supplement the disaster funding available through Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Edwards is the senior Texas member on the House Appropriations Committee.